

CITY OF ROCHESTER, NEW YORK
Environmental Assessment for the Conversion of a Portion of Genesee Valley
Park under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act as a Result of the
Brooks Landing Revitalization Project

6.0 CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

6.1 Public Involvement

The Brooks Landing Revitalization Project has an extensive history of public involvement involving long-range planning and project-specific community input. Three newspaper articles, dated August 12, 2002, February 7, 2003, and November 16, 2003, have been included in Appendix M to provide background on the Urban Renewal District and the history of the Brooks Landing project.

In September 1986, the Genesee River South Corridor Land Use & Development Plan identified the project area as a key commercial site to serve the surrounding neighborhood and link the neighborhood to the functions of the Genesee River, the Erie Canal system and other attractions in close proximity to the neighborhood, such as the University of Rochester (see Appendix A).

In the early 1990's, the first phase of the Genesee River South Corridor Plan was realized – the design and construction of the pedestrian bridge over the Genesee River and construction of the West Bank Riverway Trail. The pedestrian bridge achieved the first major goal of the plan – to link both sides of the river and more specially the University of Rochester with the commercial core of the South Plymouth/Brooks intersection.

Following this initial phase, the area received more attention from the City's Comprehensive Plan, entitled "Rochester 2010: The Renaissance Plan," and the recently-drafted City of Rochester's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) (Appendices C and E). The Rochester 2010 Plan included the promotion of several goals for the City which support the Genesee/Brooks initiative, including:

- (1) Environmental Stewardship (Campaign 4)
- (2) Economic Vitality (Campaign 6)
- (3) Tourism Destination (Campaign 8)
- (4) Healthy Urban Neighborhoods (Campaign 9)

The City of Rochester's Draft Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP), though not formally adopted, include program goals that will be realized by the Brooks Landing project:

- (1) To have the City of Rochester and its surrounding region be a family oriented, four season, tourist destination attraction for the northeastern United States and Canada.
- (2) To have waterfront resources that directly enhance the quality of life for city residents.

- (3) To have private, market driven investments in the tourism industry that result in additional revenue for businesses and jobs for local residents.
- (4) To have our community's waterfront related recreational, environmental, historic and cultural resources protected and/or enhanced.

As community support and momentum for the revitalization of this area increased, the Sector 4 Brooks/Genesee Revitalization Committee formed, consisting of Sector 4 community leaders, local architects, developers and the City of Rochester's Economic Development staff. After considering large retail plazas, office buildings and grocery markets, the Committee determined that a waterfront hotel and restaurant would best compliment the existing character of the 19th Ward neighborhood, the University of Rochester campus and the site history as a landing on the Genesee River and Erie Canal system. Local developers recognized a market niche for a first-class extended-stay hotel. The hotel concept presented a feasible solution and appropriate land use for a commercial anchor to initiate neighborhood revitalization.

In March 2000, the Sector 4 Brooks/Genesee Revitalization Committee hosted a design charrette for the Brook Avenue/Genesee Street Initiative. The group of over 130 people included residents from five neighborhoods in Sector 4 including the 19th Ward, Change of the Scene (COTS), Neighborhood United, Plymouth-Exchange (PLEX) and South West Area Neighborhood (SWAN). Feedback from the charrette, the most significant of which was the desire to achieve a visual and physical connection with the river, was incorporated into the overall concept, and Sector 4 neighborhood representatives sought to attract seasoned developers with experience in revitalization and waterfront development.

Together with the University of Rochester and the City of Rochester, the Committee began meeting once a month to discuss issues and opportunities associated with the initiative. Appendix M contains summaries and the agendas for Sector 4 Common Council and 19th Ward meetings from March 2001 through July 2003.

In addition to the design charrette and neighborhood leader meetings, multiple community-wide and public agency meetings were held to present and solicit feedback on the Brooks/Genesee initiative (Appendix M). The community-wide meetings were well-attended, publicized in community organization newsletters, and public notices were mailed to residents and businesses in the neighborhood. In addition, flyers and door hangers were placed at properties in the immediate project area.

After many Committee meetings and public forums, the Sector 4 Brooks/Genesee Revitalization Committee drafted the following objectives, which compliment the City's updated City of Rochester Comprehensive Plan and the South River Corridor Plan:

1. Revitalize the Brooks Avenue/Genesee Street neighborhood center
2. Enhance pedestrian access and recreational usage of the neighborhood's waterfront for area residents, businesses, institutions and visitors
3. Increase and sustain economic development in the neighborhood by (a) incorporating an extended-stay hotel and restaurant and (b) linking the Brooks/Genesee intersection to the waterfront
4. Increase daytime population

5. Increase neighborhood retail and services
6. Improve neighborhood streets, streetscapes and vehicular traffic flow
7. Increase local job opportunities
8. Decrease neighborhood blight and street crime, and increased vitality and security
9. Enhance architectural building design and neighborhood character

The following set of criteria was developed to accomplish this goal:

1. The hotel/restaurant site should be within proximity to the University of Rochester, Strong Medical Center and along a direct route to the Rochester International Airport and downtown Rochester.
2. The site should be large enough to accommodate the hotel and restaurant.
3. In an attempt to strengthen Genesee Street businesses, the site should link the waterfront of the Genesee River and Erie Canal system to the Brooks Avenue/Genesee Street neighborhood center.
4. The site should utilize the existing pedestrian bridge spanning the Genesee River / Erie Canal and connecting the University of Rochester to the City's 19th Ward.

In addition to informational meetings and community workshops, regular meetings between neighborhood leaders and public agencies helped the Brooks Landing planning process retain continuous communication between residents and the City. Multiple public hearings and review meetings were advertised in local newspapers and held in compliance with various city regulatory processes. These hearings are summarized in Appendix M. The mailing list for these public meetings is included in Appendix M.

Finally, the Brooks Landing project is supported by several area stakeholders, including the Landmark Society of Western New York, the Genesee Corridor Business Association, the City of Rochester Planning Commission and the University of Rochester (Appendix M).

6.2 Agencies and Organizations that Received the Environmental Assessment

1. City of Rochester, Department of Economic Development
2. State of New York, Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
3. The National Park Service
4. Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor
5. US Army Corps of Engineers
6. New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

6.3 Preparers and Contributors

BERGMANN ASSOCIATES (Consultants)

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Gary Olin	Senior Associate	B.S. Civil Engineering	30 years
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Kenneth R. Avery, P.E.	Water Resources Engineer, Project Manger	B.S. Civil & Environmental Engineering M.S. Water Resources Engineering	26 years
James F. Boggs	Sr. Environmental Scientist	B.S. Biology/Geology M.S. Natural Resources Management	24 years
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